

ROCK RAIDERS

PSX VERSION GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT



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Global Concept Summary

LEGO System Rock Raiders will form the first batch of models to appear as part of the brand new LEGO System Underground theme. The inspiration for LEGO System Rock Raiders is an underground universe where giant machines labour in extreme conditions to mine for precious energy crystals.

LEGO Media and LEGO Play Materials have collaborated at every stage of the concept development and for the first time will simultaneously deliver a range of products to the market place. This places the concept in a unique position within the LEGO Group as this is the first time in its history that there have been multiple products derived from a single concept, benefiting from a unified marketing campaign.

Products will include LEGO System Rock Raiders models, LEGO Rock Raiders PC CD-ROM game, LEGO Rock Raiders PSX game, LEGO Rock Raiders Puzzle Books and a LEGO Rock Raiders Comic Book.

The global launch date of the new theme is September 1999.

The LEGO Rock Raiders Universe

Deep Space, sometime in the near future...

Spiral Galaxies, giant gas clouds and billions of stars fill the endless void. Meteorites pass by, spinning across space. The enormous geological survey ship, LMS Explorer, is making its return journey home to LEGO World after a long expedition in deep space. But now it has encountered trouble: the vessel has accidentally entered a giant asteroid field! The crew fights valiantly to manoeuvre their way safely through the perilous rocks, but the endless bombardment of rocks against the Explorer's hull has put the integrity of the shields in a critical condition. Now disaster strikes again as, low on power and listing badly, the ship begins to be sucked inexorably towards a vast wormhole at the centre of the asteroid belt. There is little the crew can do but accept their fate and hang on. Miraculously, the badly damaged ship, now running on emergency power, emerges from the wormhole intact. The crew's initial relief, however, is soon turned to dismay as they realise that the wormhole has transported them far across the universe to a distant galaxy.

Unperturbed, the captain sets a course to orbit the nearest planet, hoping that the remaining emergency power will hold out long enough to make it there safely. Time is of the essence; if they are to stand any chance of making it home, the Rock Raider crew must make emergency repairs to the LMS Explorer and more importantly replenish the depleted stock of power crystals. A geological scan of the planet reveals seams of power crystals and LEGO ore, but can the sensors be trusted? The only way to find out will be to send the Rock Raider team down beneath the surface to locate and mine the precious minerals!

Game Objective

As a player your overall objective is to mine for the precious power crystals that you will need to re-energise the engines of the LMS Explorer. Power crystals are a recognised “commodity” within various LEGO System themes and children recognise and understand their value in relation to LEGO games. Within the LEGO System Rock Raiders theme we have introduced a second “commodity”; LEGO Ore. Ore is collected and refined by the Rock Raiders and used to create new buildings, vehicles and machinery.

Players will take direct control of the various vehicles offered within the game, (these remain consistent with the models available in the LEGO System Rock Raiders toy range) selecting the most appropriate vehicle for a given mission objective. For example, you may require a fast and manoeuvrable vehicle like the Hoverboard or alternatively there will be times when the sturdy Loaderdozer will be required to crash through an obstacle!

Emphasis Change from PC to PSX

LEGO Media International and Data Design Interactive have changed the emphasis of the product whilst maintaining the Rock Raiders Universe and overall game objective. The PC CD-ROM features a “god” style graphic user interface and adopts a standard menu structure for accessing the various features and functions within the game.

One of the significant differences between the PC CD-ROM and the console version of the game is the player interface: rather than controlling multiple game elements via a menu style interface, players of the PSX version will take direct control of a single vehicle, adopting a more action oriented style of game.

In addition to the fundamental change in the player interface, the console version of LEGO Rock Raiders will have unique mission maps and mission objectives.

Game Engine

The game is set in a real time 3D polygon-based environment. The 3D meshes that make up each of the levels can have a variety of undulations and the textures provide varying terrain types including lava, ice, water and rock, enhancing the game-play and adding a visual depth and richness. Each of the vehicles has specific physics code and will exhibit unique handling, providing a very enjoyable real time experience when controlling and steering them about the levels.



This 3D polygonal based viewpoint has been selected over the 2D sprite based engine traditionally used in games of this genre. The Sony PlayStation platform will enable us to achieve strong visual effects and game play as it has been designed purely with real time 3D in mind and has excellent additional capabilities such as lighting and sound.

Lighting Effects.

Dynamic lighting can be incorporated to enhance the look of the game.

Fog and other transparent effects will be used to further enhance the look of the game.

Animating textures will allow us to show water / lava effects to greater effect.

Sound.

We will be using XM music to enhance the atmospheric feel of the game.

We will also use XA audio to further enhance the feel of the game.

If possible we could also incorporate Surround Sound into the XM music player if the libraries allow this to be done. (There was mention that this would be the case at the last DevCon.)

The real time 3D engine and the camera AI will automatically rotate the view and provide the best visual experience for the player and eliminate the need to falsely remove near-side walls that would otherwise block views. We feel that this freedom will allow us to create a more realistic playing environment without having to make compromises to graphics or game play.

Levels will be comprised of some of the following elements :

Tunnels linking caverns together, forming labyrinth-like mazes.

Looser rock and soil walls, which can be excavated to travel from one cavern to another.

Natural obstructions such as lava flows, hazardous to anything that comes into contact with them. Cunning players will find ways to bridge seemingly impossible rivers of lava in order to reach bonus crystals!

Underground rivers. These will vary from being slightly stirring still waters to raging torrents that only the most skilful of players will successfully overcome.

Underground lakes and pools.

Ice. The large drilling unit feels right at home on the ice with it's huge heavy-grip tyres, but other vehicles may slip and slide.

Various creatures that may act as obstacles to your mission include:

Underground Rock monsters, Lava monsters, Ice monsters, scabby scavengers, scorpions, snakes, spiders and bats etc. The Rock, Ice and Lava monsters will attack your vehicles whilst the other creatures mainly inhibit your progress.

Game Scenarios

The player will typically start in a smaller cave or cavern and will have an understanding of the particular mission objective. These will range in style and complexity and the player will build on knowledge gained in previous episodes.

Limited time will be a key motivating factor and will provide a significant element to the majority of the missions, adding tension and providing an arcade style feel to the gameplay. The time limiting factor can be implemented in a number of ways: forced screen scrolls caused by the movement of molten lava or rushing water where a player must escape destruction by staying ahead and reaching safe ground or by triggered events where a player must achieve specific goals before disaster such as reinforcing walls to prevent cave-ins or moving explosive equipment away from an earthquake zone before the next quake!

The current mission objectives will be established by using a combination of FMV scenes and a verbal briefing from the captain of the LMS Explorer. The briefing will be supported by a text description that can be recalled at any time during play.

Once the player has understood the objective they will be able to select an appropriate vehicle and driver for the job in hand! Certain missions may require the player to use a specific piece of equipment in order to aid the narrative flow of the game and add variety. For example a rescue mission involving the safe recovery of Rock Raiders from perilous positions around a level would almost certainly demand the use of the Tunnel Transporter rather than the Hoverboard!

EXAMPLE LEVEL 1 MISSION OBJECTIVE:

The cargo ship has very little power left. It desperately needs power crystals to energise the life support systems. As a highly trained Rock Raider you have been chosen to be teleported down to the planet and find the ten energy crystals needed for the life support systems. The planet's magnetic storms have caused chaos with the teleportation pads so you will have to find your vehicle when you arrive. You have only three minutes before the all the cargo ship's energy is completely depleted.

Level Start.

The Rock Raider has been teleported into a cavern. He can run around freely. The player can see the small digger is just behind a cave wall. If the Rock Raider runs to a nearby drill-able cave wall and presses the 'X' button whilst moving forward, the Rock Raider starts drilling the wall. Once the wall collapses the Rock raider is able to jump into the small digger and drive. The small digger is good at digging soft soil and by driving to drill-able walls and pressing 'X' it can dig through the wall. If power crystals are found during the rock fall, they fly into the air and fall on the ground moments later they teleport up to the cargo ship.

On this level, there are small spiders that do not harm the vehicle but may do some harm to the Rock Raider if they touch him.

EXAMPLE LATER LEVEL MISSION SETTING:

The Rock Raiders are hard at work mining the crystals in a remote cavern when a nearby eruption of lava is detected. The player is instructed to evacuate the area as quickly as possible.

MISSION OPTIONS

Where possible we would like to offer the player a choice of different methods for completing the level.

Nearby are two vehicles: one is a hoverboard and the other a granite grinder. It is up to the player to select the most appropriate vehicle, and it is then a race against time to see if the player can race through the tunnels to safety before the lava flow reaches him

The Lava will be eroding down the tunnel at a steady rate, the map will have a wide system of tunnels which if he selects the hoverboard then he will have to weave a longer route between the caves and tunnels.

The Hoverboard has a distinct 'slide' due to its hover powers and a high degree of skill will be needed to keep it from sliding into the walls which will slow it down and may cause irreparable damage. At certain points the player will drive into a dead end cavern, however we will position an unmanned granite grinder which the player can opt to stop and use this to drill an exit to an adjacent cave, but this will cost him time!

The granite grinder will be able to dig straight through the walls, but the player will have to choose the shortest routes (thinnest walls) and which caverns to go to. As the Granite grinder is slow, if he enters a cavern with another granite grinder in then he will be faster to abandon his current machine and run across the level to take control of the new granite grinder.

The levels will all be accurately timed so the pressure is on to keep moving as fast as possible. Along the routes, there will be the occasional Crystal, which a player who has managed to get slightly ahead may want to collect for an additional bonus.



LEVEL. MISSION OBJECTIVE:

The base is under attack from Rock Monsters. It has no power for the laser defences to work, a small mobile laser platform is available and you must defend the base by scaring the RM away, until a new supply of energy crystals are flown in.

Level Start.

There is a small base sitting in a large cavern. RM come out of nearby walls, start to gather rocks and throw them at the weakened base. The player is at the other end of the map inside a MLP and must negotiate a maze like labyrinth of tunnels until he reaches the base. Once at the base, the player must drive the MLP around the base warding off RM using the laser turret on top of the MLP. After 5 mins, a helicopter lands with energy crystals and the base defences are now powered again and the mission is complete.

LEVEL . MISSION OBJECTIVE:

Due to a volcanic eruption, one of the RR bases is literally sinking into the lava. As an expert RR pilot you must rescue the RR mining team and take them to safety. The base can be teleported to safety but if any of the RR team are forced to teleport and use the remaining energy crystals then the base will be lost in the lava forever.

Start Level

You are in a cavern with no vehicles, you must drill your way out and locate the Tunnel Transporter. It is hidden in a cavern further away. If you can locate the small digger, this will aid you ability to drill faster and hence find the Tunnel Transporter quicker. Once it is found, the player must fly it around and locate the island base, surrounded by the lava. The player must then land the craft and rescue the RR team, by lifting them off and dropping them off one at a time. Once all the men are safely off, the base teleports away and the mission is complete.

THE ROCK MONSTER CULTURE



In addition to the hazards presented by the environment there are also a number of monsters and creatures inhabiting the underground!

The Rock Monster is perhaps the most feared of the underground creatures, huge and fierce he will easily destroy smaller vehicles and undefended buildings and will seriously hamper the efforts of even the largest of the Rock Raiders drilling machines!

GAME DIRECTION & GOALS

We plan to gradually unfold the Rock Raiders console game plot out over at least twenty action-packed levels. Each level will introduce a few new elements from the Rock Raiders range, with which the user may interact. The order in which the Rock Raider items are used is dependent on the overall plot of the game. The PSX game offers a completely different experience to the PC: the end-user has a much more personal encounter with each of the Rock Raider vehicles and elements. The aim is to give the player the sense of drama and excitement invoked by the underground environments by solving the game's challenges using the fantastic range of hardware in the Rock Raiders' hangar.

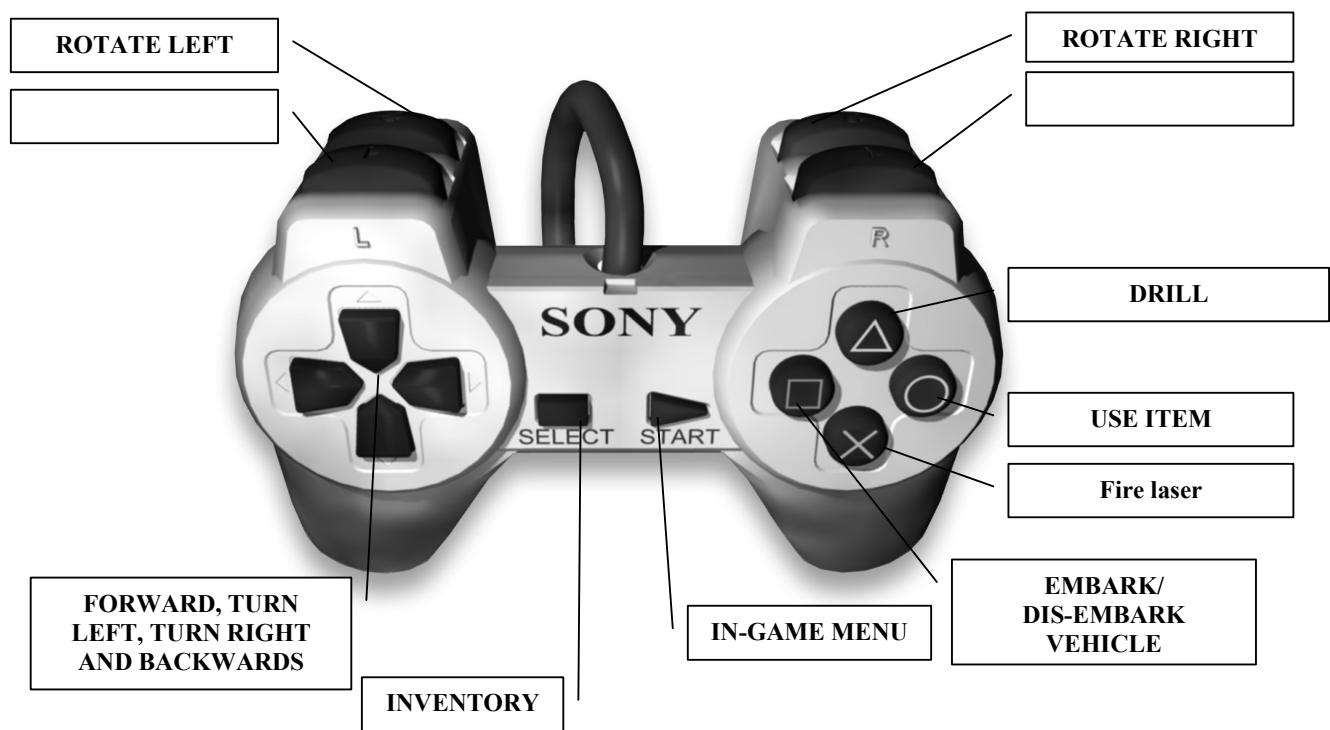
Two Player Mode

The PSX version of LEGO Rock Raiders will also include a co-operative two player mode where two players can each control a unit. The emphasis will be on the co-operative aspect of the game, for example one player may take charge of the drilling through walls aspect whilst his partner takes care of the marauding hordes of Rock monsters. This will mean that the players will have to stay fairly close together and should also minimise scrolling issues, such as both players going in different directions.

Obviously, having two players would make certain levels significantly easier, therefore to keep the same quality of gameplay, we will make changes to each level to increase the difficulty of the objective. Examples of this will be decreasing mission times, increasing the quantity of crystals to be collected, increasing the number of enemies etc.

CONTROL METHOD

The following section shows the default playstation control pad configuration for Lego Rock Raiders (PSX). The pad will be configurable to the end-user via the options menu at any time, but if they do not wish to configure the pad the following defaults will be assigned. The game also works using the Analogue pad.



VEHICLES AND ENEMIES

Vehicles:

Hovercraft: This can hover over most surfaces including rock, water and lava. As it is very light and hovers just one foot off the ground it is very susceptible to water waves or attack from enemies such as lava monsters.

Large Catamaran: This sails in the water and can be used to transport small vehicles such as the small truck or the small digger.

Large Mobile Laser Platform: This can laser through soft, medium and hard rock very quickly. Should the laser be fired upon an enemy it will give an electric shock and the enemy will run away.

Loder Dozer: This can be used to bash into rock at high speed. It can also shovel up large amounts of earth to used to fill crevices or build islands across water.

Tunnel Transporter: This can be used to transport men, crystals, ore, even a small truck or small digger. It will land, takeoff and fly under player control.

Rapid Rider: This is a small catamaran which can transport a RockRaider and a has a small storage area to carry crystals.

Small Digger: This is useful for digging soft soil and transporting crystals. It is fairly fast and can outrun most enemies.

Small Mobile Laser Platform: This has similar abilities to the large mobile laser platform, but is lighter and faster and can only drill soft and medium rock.

Small Truck: This is the fastest land based vehicle over flat land with a storage space for one crystal.

Granite Grinder: The Granite Grinder is capable of going over the bumpiest of terrain and can break cave walls by repeated ramming them and drilling creating a sort of hammer action.

Small Helicopter: This is capable of transporting only the pilot but needs fuel. It has a turbo action for very fast speed and is excellent for flying across difficult terrain e.g. water or lava. Due to it's height and turbo jets it is very difficult for the planet inhabitants to attack it in flight.

Enemies:

Rock Monster: The rock monster is a very powerful land based enemy. It can punch vehicles and buildings. It can stamp it's feet, causing earth tremors which may topple granite grinders or your Rock Raider man if he is not in a suitable vehicle.

Ice Monster: This creature has similar abilities to the Rock monster but as it is lighter in weight, it cannot cause earth tremors. It can however freeze objects in a tomb of ice with it's frosty breath. If a vehicle is encased in ice it will require fully de-frosting before being operational.

Lava Monster: This creature lives in the lava and will fire jets of lava or throw balls of lava at anything that comes close to it's domain. This is a very dangerous creature and can move through the lava very rapidly often laying in ambush for the unsuspecting victims.

Large Spiders: The large spiders are very fast insects which can spit web over short distances. They tend to ambush their prey by surrounding the prey in packs, immobilising vehicles with their sticky web.

Rock Whale: The rock whale is a large lumbering oaf like creature, which slowly walks around the level. It often stops for a sleep in the most awkward of places and can cause delays forcing the RR man to use an alternative route. This often means drilling or digging around it. However, if provoked it can attack using it's body as a battering ram.

Scabby Scavenger: This mischevious creature steals crystals and even wheels from vehicles. He usually gets bored with his booty and often will drop it nearby and goes off to find something else of interest.

Slugs: Slugs act like small battering rams. They often work in packs but due to their weight, often inflict only minimal damage on the large vehicles but can be quite devastating for small vehicles after sustaining a prolonged attack.

Scorpions, Snakes, Bats: These creatures normally only have any effect on the RR himself as they are too small to cause any damage to vehicles.